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CENTRAL FAX CENTER****MAR 20 2008****Remarks**

This is in response to the Office Action dated January 10, 2008.

Claims 1-8 and 12-17 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hanson (US5919174); and the remaining claims once again stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Hanson, either singly [claim 18] or in combination with Decloux (US5320328) [claim 9] or Steigerwald (US3828982) [claims 10-11].

In addition to the differences between the instant invention and the prior art set out in the previous amendment, another of the differences between the present invention and the prior art documents cited that should be pointed out is that the claimed valve element is movable in alignment with the bore through the valve and suction catheter and blocks flow in a different way.

Claim 24 has been amended to be directed to a suction catheter assembly. Amended Claim 24 now makes it clear that the first bore communicates with the suction catheter; and when the valve member is in the first position, it allows unobstructed flow from the suction catheter along the first bore and to the second lumen.

These amendments clarify some of the differences between the arrangement of the present invention and Hanson (US5919174). Hanson describes a valve with a valve element 45 slidable along a passage in the stem 25. The stem 25 is inclined at an angle relative to the catheter 72 so differs in this respect from the claims, which require the valve member to be slidable in alignment with the bore communicating with the suction catheter.

The claims also require the sealing surface of the valve member to be either on a side of an aperture remote from the first bore (to allow unobstructed flow) or to be on

an opposite side (to block flow from the catheter). This has an appreciable advantage in that there is no obstruction or restriction to fluid flow. By contrast, in Hanson's arrangement the valve is closed when the seal 38 lies on the plane 49 (column 4, lines 24 to 28). The valve is opened by pressing down on the cap 15 to push the seal 38 into the well 53 and allow fluid to flow through the channel 47 in the plunger stem 45 (column 4, lines 28-31). So, in the open state of Hanson's valve, as channel 47 is the diameter reduced portion of the plunger stem 45 attached to actuator cap 15, fluid is constrained to flow through the channel 47 in the valve element itself. It will be appreciated that, with the Hanson assembly, if solid or semi-solid material should collect in the region of the channel 47 it could be trapped when the valve element is released to close, and thereby prevent complete closing.

Decloux (US5320328) describes a very different form of valve from that of the present invention. In particular it lacks the rotatable locking member required by Claim 24. Also, the valve member of Decloux is not slidable in alignment with the bore communicating with the suction catheter in the manner required by the amended claim.

Steigerwald (US3828982) does show an arrangement for preventing inadvertent actuation but differs from the present invention in that it relates to an aerosol dispenser; not a suction catheter. Furthermore, the manner in which actuation is prevented is very different. Steigerwald employs a slide that is pushed in along its length and is held in to enable actuation. There is nothing to suggest a rotatable locking member of the kind required by Claim 24 of the present application.

Thus, it is submitted that Claim 24 and the claims dependent therefrom are not anticipated by Hanson, and likewise those dependent claims rejected by the combinations of Hanson with the other prior art documents are not obvious over such combinations.

Now that the claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, the examiner is requested to enter this amendment, review the application and pass the same to issue at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,



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